

Burlington Town Center Mall Redevelopment
January 2016 Presentation of Revised Plan & Framework for Development Agreement
Public Comments

The following document provides all comments the City received during the January 5 and 21, 2016 public presentations on the mall's revised development plans, as well as comments that were provided in writing via the Survey Monkey link on the city's website, emails, and other communications. A full video recording of the January 5 presentation, and the slides from these presentations, are available at www.burlingtonvt.gov/btvmall.

Urban Design

Building Design

- The fronts of the buildings currently on the two streets are appalling and virtually anything would be an improvement. Losing the current parking garage will go a long way to fixing Cherry Street and having openings into the building on Bank Street will break up the barren wall and make the street more inviting.
- The “inside out” concept should dramatically improve things. As you know, the design details have a big impact on how attractive the street will feel to people. Keep in mind the south side of the mall will be in the sun while the north side will always be shaded.
- The plan achieves the city's urban design goals to activate Bank & Cherry Streets.
- What building materials are proposed to be used?
- Plantings could be used to disguise the parking.
- Building design is NYC brand, not Vermont brand.
- This is a big improvement overall, but it doesn't provide enough positive architecture—is it possible to resurrect some of the architectural features from the previous designs?
- Design will continue to be refined through the Development Agreement and DRB/DAB processes.
- The project feels monolithic and generic, not welcoming—having very little to do with Burlington's urban strengths. The above grade parking can never be “hidden,” the complex feels like just that a complex built of one time and without reference to place.
- Design's undulation on the walkway over St. Paul Street- just keep it simple/modern looking.
- Need step-backs from all streets on the grid to minimize impact on neighboring historic buildings and on Bank Street.
- I'm concerned about the transition along the northern edge of the project—from the park-like church to 14 stories straight up. As far as I can tell, none of the renderings show that view. There needs to be significant variations in the façade and set back (in the mass of the building- not along the sidewalk). I hope the church is participating in the discussions.
- What zoning mechanisms can we use to break up the façade for larger retailers that will be in the building?

Building Height

- Don't worry about those whining about the possible height, Burlington needs the space. Make this as tall as it can/needs to be.
- I am concerned about the height of the two residential buildings, it will change the waterfront view and Burlington's character.
- Agreed about height, I want more density but 14 floors is too much
- Please reconsider 14-story tower. It is unnecessary and is not permitted in our current guidelines. It is a monstrosity and will not enhance the charm of Burlington.
- Will 14 stories change the Cityscape?
- The big elephants in the room that remain are the 14 stories and how much affordable housing.
- Will the vote approve height?
- Building shouldn't be taller than the current 10 story height.
- What view sheds might be impacted by the height?

Sustainability

- What are the project's sustainability goals?
- Goal is LEED gold equivalent.
- What about water quality—stormwater is supposed to be clean before off-site, what about sewer treatment? What is the cleaning mechanism and timing for a big rain event?
- Green roof has been designed with a lot of capacity for rain water- more effective now that there aren't park elements on the roof, too.
- Why are the solar panels flat?
- The east-west orientation of the site and buildings give the opportunity for passive solar. The orientation alone should reduce heating needs by ~30% for spaces facing south and good design can push that higher. I know PV is planned and that's good; passive solar isn't as noticeable or sexy, but careful design makes the difference between great daylighting and negligible heating bills and overheated spaces with glare.

Other Urban Design Comments

- How will the development affect surrounding properties?
- For the city to be able to continue to grow, we need to increase housing and retain/increase non-retail and restaurant jobs, and to grow the grand list the buildings must be allowed to be taller.
- Urban streets should appeal, first and foremost, to people—on foot and not in cars. Street trees are an important component as well. Though not part of this project, Cherry Street design should continue west across Battery over the bank (as stairways) to the waterfront.
- Although I like the proposal, I would suggest not allowing advertising in second floor windows. If these windows allowed advertising, it would take away from the "towny" cosy feel like that of Church Street and would make this streetscape feel like a discount mall. Street level windows are wonderful for retailers to create interesting displays. Second floor advertising, in my opinion, is unattractive and creates a less inviting mood overall.

Program of Uses

Commercial

- Excited for this to begin, I want it to open tomorrow. What is the plan to keep retail here in Burlington? Engage them? We need a mix of retail. What will CEDO do to keep retail here in Burlington?
- Can a percentage of Vermont businesses be included in the retail mix?
- Diversity of retail options plus large volume will help make this be a destination
- What will be the breakdown of services versus retail. Will there be an opportunity for amenities like hardware, dry cleaning, office supply. There's no plan to bring in a Target?
- Want to be able to shop local, but a diversity of retail is good—just not Walmart.
- Where is the market coming from for the retail?

Housing

- The addition of housing, some affordable, is key to making this mixed use project successful. New housing is this projects most exciting element.
- How long will the affordable housing stay affordable?
- We've seen some projects never reach completion after they've begun. How will we make sure that all phases get built? In particular, will the affordable housing actually get built?
- Will the housing serve our existing demand or is it aimed at a new population?
- Burlington doesn't want a project where affordable housing units are separated from the market-rate units.
- The proposed uses are a valuable addition to our community, although the phasing puts residential last which lends itself to a no-residential result even if its in the MOU. I've seen it many times...

Other Uses/Comments

- I believe this project would enhance the downtown shopping environment, especially if affordable shops are included. I think the affordable housing needs to be truly affordable, and one br apartments need to be under \$850. It would help to know who would be managing them, since those who have current affordable housing need some confidence in the competence of the managers.
- The program of uses meets our needs and will be valuable additions to our community.
- Has there been any consideration for programming in the mall for non-commercial uses such as a teen center, performance venue, etc?
- I agree, make sure there is non-commercial area and entertainment. The fun you can have in the mall should be more than buying things.
- *Make a permanent home for the Farmer's Market in the Arcade, City Hall park needs a rest.*
- What else is available for Old North End neighborhood residents? What about low-income folks? Will there be amenities like access to jobs for our neighbors?
- It think it is necessary for both retail and increased housing in the city, and it looks like a great opportunity for people who walk in the city. My only question is how long it will take and will I live to see its completion! ;-)

- The complex will have a negative long-term impact on the city's character and livability. It's scale overwhelms the character that makes Burlington very desirable in a pack of non-receipt places. The site needs redevelopment, but the City would do better to restore the historic grid and develop a complex in a less monolithic manner.
- The observation deck will be amazing if it feels truly public and easy to get up to. If the plan is for it to be available for private events like the Boathouse, I would urge there to be two floors, each with the same views, one sometimes private and one always public. If this isn't certain, I don't think TIF funding should apply to this part of the project.
- How will noise from mechanical units be mitigated?

Circulation

General Circulation Comments

- I am excited about reconnecting North to South. Burlington for bikes and pedestrians.
- Will there be a shuttle bus for north-south traffic to incentivize bus ridership and more services?
- I love the new streets.
- We need more bike infrastructure (including parking and street use)- dedicated bike lanes would be good for more protection
- East to west connections should be pleasant and easy for pedestrians
- Connecting streets is critical
- The Burlington arcade isn't a straight connection, what is the logic?
- Given the tradeoffs, the plan for circulation will meet our transportation needs downtown.
- Street connectivity will improve quality of life.
- Regarding traffic & congestion- Cherry and College should be made into one-way streets; College should be made friendly for pedestrians.
- Where do deliveries happen?
- How will loading facilities be handled? It needs to be adequate for retailers.

St. Paul Street Connection

- I like the Pine Street connection a LOT, and the arcade seems like a good idea too. (N.B. any relation to the Burlington Arcade in London?)
- Connecting both St. Paul and Pine, in any way possible, are both important features. The current proposal works for me. I especially like what's proposed for St. Paul.
- Is St. Paul Street open to cars and pedestrians?
- I am very concerned about cars being allowed to drive on an extension of St. Paul Street between Bank Street and Cherry Street. 1) Cars would make that block of St. Paul far less pedestrian friendly. 2) Cars would make the Cherry Street bus traffic more snarled as well as less pedestrian friendly for people finding their specific bus by having to cross the street.
- Having lived in both the ONE and the South end, I'm not sure that the St Paul St will really add that much to circulation. It can't give direct access to the ONE because it runs into the development on Pearl St. I, for one, will continue to work around with Battery and Winooski, but will greatly appreciate the walk through at both Pine and St. Paul.

- With the new transit station at St. Paul and Cherry, could we do the arcade at St. Paul and have a full street at Pine Street?
- The transit center could be a place for bikes, buses and pedestrians as a slow street
- Mimic Church St. with no cars
- The Street will be engineered/designed to be slow. Think about crossing Church Street on Bank Street during the summer months.
- Can't we open street connections for pedestrians only instead of cars?
- If St. Paul is not closed to cars, maybe encourage no cars during the summer or at certain times of the day, etc.
- Protected bike lanes on the new Street is a must—even better, open the new St. Paul Street to bikes and buses only.

Pine Street Connection

- Missed opportunity—Pine Street arcade. Would be great to be able to bike through.
- Rooftop parks aren't that accessible for the general public—what's the difference for an arcade? What is the plan for security and public access to assure people can use it [the arcade]?
- We should restore the urban street grid, including Pine Street as a full street
- I am very pleased to get these connections reopened and that one and only one will be a street. To me that is the biggest benefit of this project to the City, one that will affect many people including those who do not use the mall. Initially, I liked St. Paul being the street, but since that is where the bus station is going, I think Pine would be better. I have heard it is more difficult, but this is a long term piece of infrastructure and that needs to be weighed against the utility. Making St. Paul the street also keeps the car traffic a little further from the pedestrian center and puts the pedestrian passage a little closer. (I commute around the mall daily so am familiar with the area and will personally benefit, but there's a building on top of where Pine St. goes, so that one is a little confusing, I guess the passage will be offset to the East?)
- The arcade will only mask what is otherwise out of scale and non-pedestrian friendly development.

On-Site Parking

- Great idea with the parking on 3-5 floors
- The parking looks wonderful. The Church St. garage is much nicer than the Cherry St. garage in terms of air circulation and light, and hopefully this planned garage will have more in common with the Church St. one. I hope the parking is available for folks in the affordable housing at little or no cost.
- Since we currently have enough parking and are working to use it better, I hope the additional parking is justified through good assumptions about the lower car use of people living downtown next door to the transit center, and the needs of the new businesses. Many recent projects have used low parking ratios and I hope this one uses the lowest ratio conceivable. Car storage is a poor use of urban space. I think locating it above the retail makes sense now and gives us the opportunity to repurpose the space if it is not needed for parking in the future.

- While the economic considerations of an underground garage are understandable, putting parking on the south side seems to neglect use of solar gain. Above ground space is valuable.
- Are there any opportunities for this to become a bike hub (for parking)?
- How did we arrive at the need for 900+ parking spaces? What if the money was used to incentivize office/residential tenants instead?
- Parking does not have to be prohibitive underground, particularly given the long-term negative impacts to the community overall. Or, it would be better to create a freestanding garage on another block and not try to pretend it is not what it is not.
- Why is the only entrance to the garage on Cherry Street?
- Will there be on-street parking on the new St. Paul Street?
- Given the prohibitive cost of underground parking, the plan is acceptable for accommodating parking on site.
- The plan for parking works depending on what form of screening will be used.
- Please consider substantial investment in public transit and cycle paths to decrease the need for over 300K s.f. parking. This large increase in parking spaces will burden existing streets. It is better to invest in TDM. Alternatively, developer should pay for increased traffic impacts on all the surrounding streets and main roads. Pay for better bus service from South Burlington to Burlington, for example, and reduce # of parking spaces.
- With effective screening, the parking above ground should not be a problem. The attractiveness of what's above it is also very important.

Proposed Development Agreement Framework

Tax Increment Financing

- Yes, I would support the City's investment of TIF fund for public capital projects.
- Will TIF affect retailers/tenants in the new mall?
- What is the anticipated tax increment to be generated by this project?
- How long will it take to pay off the public investments?
- Why are there two different TIF zones?
- What are the TIF rates and how is it broken down between city and state?
- I absolutely support the City's investment of TIF funds in public aspects of the project. My only question would be how long the increased tax revenue would be tied up in loan repayments before it becomes cash for the city.
- The new street and streetscape improvements are worthy projects of TIF investment, are in public space, and have public benefits.
- I would support the investment of public funds in reestablishing the street grid for both traffic and pedestrians. The city has no business in supporting the project as envisioned.

Zoning Changes

- How is downtown defined? How do we make sure this doesn't begin ordinance change 'creep' to other areas? How many stories will it need to be for the amendment?

Other

- Support the Development Agreement framework if were also a commitment to hire local low income people to work at the new complex and that it include a full mix of office space, market rate and affordable housing.
- Will the labor used to build the project be unionized?
- Can there be workforce training?
- Can the development agreement ensure a presence of “local” flavor (retail)?

Other Comments on the Project

- JUST LET THEM GET STARTED
- Great public process, thank you for your hard work.
- The property owner has listened to people—this is the world class project for downtown. It is terrific and will be a compliment to Church Street, help prevent sprawl. Only thing it’s missing is a hotel.
- The design and overall plan is terrific. It is time for the City to move forward and make this dream come true.
- I do not agree that there should be a redevelopment, a rebuilding, a redesigning, and reconstruction of our Beautiful Burlington Mall. I love it the way it is and I hope all our lovely retail stores return to the spaces that are already here!
- What is the timeline for the project? When will construction start?
- Get this moving, and please, no appeal to permits.
- Let’s get this think moving!
- If construction may at all cause vibrations to homes as far away as Sherman Street (?), like bus terminal (CCTA) project has, then many more neighbours should be notified of impact and remediation of homes for cracking due to vibrations should be requested in pre-planning proposal. CCTA failed the neighbours in forewarning us.
- What will be the construction delivery method? Go out to bid?
- Hire more security, change the name back to Security/Public Safety, get cameras.
- What should/can we do as citizens to help the project move along and educate our peers/friends about it?
- How many jobs will this project create—during construction? After completion?
- Make sure pollution isn’t exacerbated by dense infill development.
- Make sure there is wastewater capacity.
- Has the fire department seen these plans?
- Please show proposed development in the existing surroundings i.e. current building heights, rather than potential future adjacent building heights.
- Take into account the new bus station, which does not seem to be reflected in the plans as currently depicted.